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DATE: March 22, 2004

FILE NO: ROC920010064US1

TO: Examiner Andrew Fischer

FAX NO: 703/872-9306

COMPANY: USPTO

FROM: Gero G. McClellan

PAGE(S) with cover: 13

ORIGINAL TO FOLLOW? YES NO

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION DATED FEBRUARY 23, 2003

U.S. SERIAL NO.: 09/848,573

FILING DATE: May 3, 2001

INVENTOR: Bates et al.

EXAMINER: Andrew Fischer

GROUP ART UNIT: 3672

CONFIRMATION NO.: 6820

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

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**In re Application of:
Bates et al.**

Serial No.: 09/848,573

Confirmation No.: 6829

Filed: May 3, 2001

For: Systems and Methods for
Operating Vending Machines

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

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Group Art Unit: 3672

Examiner: Fischer, A.

OFFICIAL

CERTIFICATE OF FAX
37 CFR 1.8

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT DATED FEBRUARY 23, 2003

In response to the Restriction Requirement dated February 23, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on March 23, 2004, please enter this response and reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below. While no fees are believed due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge counsel's Deposit Account No. 09-0465, for any fees, including extension of time fees or excess claim fees, required to make this response timely and acceptable to the Office.

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper. Remarks/Arguments begin on page 10 of this paper.